DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 070 017 CG 007 652

TITLE	Extending Guidance and Counseling Services for the Mentally Handicapped.
INSTITUTION	New York State Personnel and Guidance Association, Inc., Latham.; New York State Teachers of the Mentally Handicapped, Inc.
PUB DATE	72
NOTE	31p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Counseling Services; *Counselors; Educable Mentally Handicapped; *Guidance Programs; *Mentally Handicapped; *Mental Retardation; Pupil Personnel Services; Special Education; Special Programs; Special Services

ABSTRACT

This paper contains reports prepared by counselors and teachers of the mentally retarded. The thesis of this paper is that the opportunity for the handicapped student to lead a productive life can only be accomplished through proper education, guidance, and counseling. Included are reports on the following: elementary counseling of educable mentally retarded children; the team approach for teaching the mentally retarded; a cooperative senior high school special education program; vocational guidance for the mentally handicapped; and general articles on counseling the mentally retarded. (WS)

ED 070017

CG 007 652

EXTENDING GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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The Joint Committee
New York State Teachers of the Mentally Handicapped, Inc.
and
New York State Personnel & Guidance Association, Inc.

Fall 1972

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INTRODUCTION

Education, training and counseling of the mentally handicapped student for his future role in society is a problem which, in this advanced technological society, the opportunity for the handicapped student to lead a productive life is greater than ever. This can only be accomplished if the student is educated, guided and counseled properly.

This is the problem which faces the educator today. With our more comprehensive knowledge of the student's problems, and with proper cooperation of the education complex, we are in a position today to better help this student to lead a productive and fruitful life.

The reports which follow in this booklet were prepared by interested and dedicated workers in the field of education; counselors and teachers of the mentally retarded. We feel that their observations and experiences are extremely relevant to the subject of education, and a thorough reading of these reports will be most enlightening.

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GENERAL INFORMATION AND INTRODUCTION FOR GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED

Mrs. Ezella M. Marable, Special Education Teacher
Kingston Consolidated School System
Kingston, New York

The basic philosophy underlying the education of retarded children is no different from that recognized for all children. The fundamental aim of all education is to teach children to live wisely and well in the environment in which they may find themselves. Mentally retarded children learn more slowly than average children. Abstract academic learnings may be beyond their ability. In many cases their attention span is short and their memories weak. They require more guidance intellectually and socially. Although the mentally retarded are slower to learn than most, and they have greater difficulty in coping with swift changes in the complexities of life, they are not hopeless or helpless.

The "term" mental retardation itself is often misunderstood. Simple stated "Mental Retardation" is a condition resulting from a basic abnormality of the human mind. It refers to the lack of intellectual ability resulting from an arrested mental development. A distinction must be made between retardation due to limitations of evaluations, environment, or resulting from differences in languages, socio-economic level or culture. A child's limited sight, hearing or emotional adjustment may be other examples of a restricted learning situation.

According to National statistics, three per cent of the children in our society are mentally retarded. The Bureau of Mentally Handicapped of the New York State Department of Education have made a more conservative estimate. They feel there are 2½ per cent in the mentally retarded group, with 2 per cent being educables and ½ per cent trainables. The definitions of educables and trainables are listed in the regulations adopted by the Commissioner of Education. The term "educable" mentally retarded refers to a child who, on the basis of a comprehensive examination, including a thorough individual psychological evaluation, shows that he falls lower than 1.5 deviations below the means of the general population. These children are not prevented from being in a regular classroom, but are usually placed in a special class so they can profit more from a smaller group and special programs that are used in special classes. The term "trainables" refers to children who on the basis of the same type of evaluation and examinations fall 5 deviations below the mean of the general population. These children usually are not profiting now, and cannot profit from regular classroom instruction, but will be able to benefit from a special class program in the special education classes.

About seven out of ten of the mentally retarded or as some call them "Mentally Handicapped", can be taught enough to live successfully with others and even support themselves. We must remember retardation is not an illness, but a symptom of some failure of development, or a result of inadequate

stimulation from the home and the community in which the child lives, or it could be an inadequate opportunity to learn.

Today's schools do more than teach the 3 R's. They are concerned with the full development of the child, which means not only does he learn from textbooks, but also that he grows physically, socially and emotionally. Because of this emphasis over and above subject matter, and because we know that a well-adjusted child learns more readily when he is directed, guidance should take its place in the elementary school as well as the junior and senior high school program.

A good guidance counselor is helpful to parents, teachers and pupils. The activities of a well-organized guidance program can be thought of in terms of observations, evaluations, reports and referrals. There are instances when teachers or parents need assistance with a child who is having unusual difficulties in the school. In such instances, the guidance service can assist by studying the situation, having conferences and making referrals to the proper person. I feel that communication between the school and the parents of children in attendance in the special classes is of prime importance to the overall development of an effective educational environment for every one concerned.

As a product of a so-called special class, I feel a special child should not be neglected. I was in a class for the partially sighted from grades one through twelve. I really feel the handicapped children whether they are mentally handicapped, physically handicapped or emotionally disturbed should be given the opportunity to show that they have a potential contribution to make to the society in which they live.

THE NEED FOR TEAM EFFORT IN WORKING WITH THE EDUCABLE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mrs. Laura G. Chasin
Special Education Teacher
Rondout Valley High School
Stone Ridge, New York

A new trend in special education is currently taking place in our schools. Educators are recognizing the need for a team approach in studying and working with the handicapped child. Two years ago, the state education department passed a law requiring each school system to have a committee of professionals to evaluate each year every child in the special education class. This committee is made up of a minimum of one special education teacher or administrator, a school psychologist, a school physician and "...other responsible school authorities."

It is becoming apparent to all that we can no longer lock the special education teacher and her students in a room for six hours a day, 180 days a year, and expect her to do an adequate job. We need help! In the past, at least a minimum of psychological services have been available in our schools, for without the standardized intelligence test there is no special class placement. School nurse-teachers and speech therapists too, have played a fairly active role in special education, perhaps due to the overt and obvious needs in these areas of many special education children.

One service area in which little has been available to the special child is the area of guidance. This is particularly true on the primary level since guidance counselors are rarely found in the elementary schools at all.

Though the role of guidance in special education at the primary level may be less apparent than the role of a speech therapist or psychologist, it is nonetheless a vitally important and ever-demanding role. To fully understand how the counselor can best serve on the special education team at this level, I'd like to briefly explain some of the particular needs which are common to this group.

To begin with, in many cases, it is when the child first comes to school that he is identified as being handicapped. The reasons for this are many and varied and not within the limits of this discussion. At any rate, seldom is an educable child identified as mentally handicapped in the pre-school years, and all too often is he identified as such in the intermediate and adolescent years. In any case, whenever a child is recommended for special class placement it comes as quite a shock to both parent and child.

I have seen parents react to special class placement in a variety of ways:

1-Some blindly accept the judgment of the schools and agree to the placement;
2-Others react in a rather irrate manner;
3-Still there are others that don't really care where their child is placed;

4-Finally, there is the confused parent who searches and grasps at any bit of knowledge she can get in hopes of understanding her child better. She may call the principal, teacher, psychologist or even the family physicist to help find the answer.

All of the above mentioned parents have in common their basic lack of understanding of their handicapped child. It is the job of the pupil personnel team to in a sense, educate the parent. It is our belief that it is the role of the counselor to play a prominent role on that team; to meet and counsel parents in reference to the child's placement and adjustment to special education; to aid the parent in his understanding of the child; and, to give continuous support to the parent.

In addition to parent counseling, the child too is in need of help. He is confused and disturbed by his placement. The child, probably more than anyone else realizes that there is something wrong with him. To begin with, prior to special education placement, the child has had a series of failures. Like his parents, the child has trouble understanding and adjusting to the special class. All too often he inwardly accepts the label of "retard" given to him by both his schoolmates and classmates. It is often difficult for him to express his confusion and anxiety. In addition, many educable children come from culturally deprived home environments where proper stimulation and guidance are often lacking. As such, many come to school beset by a variety of social and emotional problems.

Keeping these characteristics in mind, counseling would provide someone who the child can relate to on a completely individual basis, someone who is apart from the class which the child both clings to as a form of security and yet blames for all his problems; someone who apart from the teacher can show an interest and understanding in the child's problems.

At this point it must be mentioned that with the exception of special subject areas such as art and music, many special ed children are part of a small group with the same teacher all day long, all year long, often for three or four years. While this aspect of special education has many obvious advantages, it also has its disadvantages. The child tends to become over-dependent on his teacher. The teacher, too, tends to become overinvolved with the child. Thus, although the teacher may be closest to the child, she is not always best suited to objectively evaluate a child and counsel him. The counselor can therefore serve as an aid to the child as well as a resource person to the teacher.

I am a great believer in special education. When a child belongs in special ed then it's the best possible placement for him. However, if a child does not, or no longer, belongs, in a special ed class, then we are truly doing him an injustice by keeping him there. This sounds very elementary. Yet, each year many children who were misplaced or who no longer need special ed services are continued in the special grades. In many cases the blame lies with the special ed teacher who is sometimes the last to remember that placement need not necessarily be permanent. But even the more conscientious and perceptive teacher often has quite a fight ahead of her in trying to place a child "out." In addition to the administrative difficulty that the teacher may come up against, there is a problem of

selling a "phasing-back" policy to the regular class teacher. The tremendous amount of ignorance about special education and mental retardation is unfortunately well-reflected in our schools. Guidance personnel could aid in phasing a child back by being a resource person for and acting as a counselor to regular class teachers, as well as the administrative staff. At the elementary level, the gap in learning between the special education and regular education child is least acute. It is here that a policy of phasing a child back into a regular grade has the greatest chance of success.

Finally, in order for the counselor to do an effective job with the educable child, he must be aware of special education needs. It is the feeling of most special education teachers that it is imperative for all school personnel to have educational preparation in dealing with the problems of the handicapped. Special education must become a part of our school systems. This can only truly occur through a change in attitude and understanding by all those who interact with the educable child.

THE CONTINUING NEED FOR ADEQUATE COUNSELING ON THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Mrs. Veronica DeLaRosa
Special Education Teacher
School #12
Troy, New York

Intermediate Classes IQ 50-75 CA 10-13

Although the usual range in an intermediate class is from CA 10-13, quite often we find the CA ranges from 8-14.

Many of these children come to us after years of social promotions, academic frustration, and consequent emotional instability. It becomes increasingly difficult to determine whether our classes are fulfilling the aim for which they were created, that of providing services for children whose mental capacities are below normal due to heredity or injury.

Or, in practice, has the definition of MH progressed to encompass those whose mental abilities are stunted by social deprivation but whose perceptive abilities, while impaired, are still of the quality called normal?

These children were unready for formal school programs, were frustrated by them, failed in an attempt to accept and be accepted by the usual school programs, and have "tuned out" education and learning. Their motivation, if ever they had any, is almost dead. Can anyone expect such a child to show his true capabilities on a Stanford-Binet test on any one day with a relative stranger?

This is the one time in the child's life when Guidance could give invaluable help. When a child is to be tested, wouldn't it be a good idea to have someone discuss the test with him, preparing him to do his best, allaying fears, so that his test results would be more valid and in keeping with his innate abilities?

Also, if a counselor talked with this child, would not his observations, plus those of the psychologist, and the teacher as well as the test results be a better base on which to make a judgment for the placement of this child?

Instead, children are sent to us, their placement often based solely on a test result, or the child's inability to adjust in a "regular classroom." These children are often asocial, agressive and disruptive. We, their teachers, beg for help in guiding them to more acceptable behavior while there is still time to redirect all their energies and abilities to their self-improvement and self-fulfillment, socially as well as academically.

One teacher, alone, working with fifteen children, individually, on all levels has little opportunity to give individual counsel, to listen to and help solve individual problems and crises as they arise. Often the impact

of the emotional abrasions of several of these children take all the teacher's ingenuity to keep it from exploding into agressive actions unacceptable in a classroom environment.

Our children need to have someone to turn to, to discuss their problems with, to gradually bring out the real reason for their asocial behavior. Our children need someone to explain their problems to their parents, to help parents understand that we, teacher and child, need them as working partners to help the child with his problems.

We teachers need another voice - a voice which, to the parent, would be a voice in the child's corner, to explain just what a "special class" is, what the child can expect to gain from it, what the parent can expect of his child, academically, and what the child's prognosis is at that point of time.

If other professionals understood the needs of our children for more services, such as gym, home economics, and shop, we could, perhaps, be more successful in creating an atmosphere of acceptance of our children, so these services would more readily be given.

Often other professionals say they have no training in handling MH children. Then is it not time that teacher training and Guidance training reflect the need to know all types of children, not just the so-called, "normal?"

If it becomes apparent that some children need professional help beyond that within the scope of the school, might not a counselor be able to guide the school and the teacher to where these services may be available, and help to get parental cooperation in seeking these services?

Since Guidance often provides films on job areas, and/or social behavior, might not we, teachers, feel free to use their superior knowledge in this area to provide teaching material for our classes?

When a counselor and a child have good rapport, we should like to see the same counselor-child relationship span some few years, not only to provide continuity but also to give the child a chance to be quite open with his counselor when discussing problems.

OUTLINE OF A COMPLETE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICE AT THE JUNIOR HIGH LEVEL FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD

Mrs. Ruth G. Cope
Guidance Counselor
Steinmetz Junior High School
Schenectady, New York

We try to have the Special Class students take part in areas where they have some aptitudes, feel comfortable and get self-enjoyment from participating.

Special Class students and their parents are invited to take an active part in the school.

Parents are invited to all activities that are taking place at the school, Glee Club Concert, Band Concert and 9th grade Graduation. Special students have participated in these.

Parents of Special Students meet with the counselor for interviews. Through these interviews the counselor interprets strengths and weaknesses of the special students. We discuss possible future work the student may be able to do. We try to help the parent become realistic about the student's potentialities. The parents are encouraged to call the counselor, whenever they are concerned.

Parents frequently request conferences. Workers from outside agencies request them, too. They meet with the counselor and teacher to straighten out problems.

Parents of special class students and parents of regular class students have been invited to take part in small discussion groups.

Parents attend Back to School Night for 7-8-9 grade students.

At this Orientation meeting there is a general assembly for all parents. Parents then meet to discuss student curriculum with home room teachers and subject matter teachers. The parents of Special Class students meet with the Special Class teacher. They have the opportunity to meet with Home Economics, Music, Physical Education, Industrial Arts and Art teachers.

At the time the Special Class students are to enter the 7th grade they are included in the regular scheduled orientation program for incoming 7th graders to junior high. The feeder Elementary Schools are visited in June by counselors. Elementary students are divided into groups according to initials. Their future junior high counselors, accompanied by students previously from that school, hold informal meetings with the groups. All Special Class students meet with the N-Z group. I am the counselor with whom they meet.

I serve as the counselor for Special students, because I have taught all levels of Special Classes and have an understanding and a desire to do this. It is a very happy solution with the other counselors.

I work closely at all times with the Special Class teachers. We have three groups, grades 7-8-9 in our school. We make plans together and evaluate the results in the interest of the students.

Special Students take part:

1. The orientation of new 7th grade students to Steinmetz Junior High. They serve as student guides with the regular students, showing the incoming 7th graders a tour of the building.

2. They elect representatives to the student council and take an active part. They enter into all activities planned by the student council. They are proud to serve here and take this honor seriously. Presently, Special Students are on the Building Maintenance, Cafeteria and 9th grade Graduation Committees.

Special students take part in helping to form Steinmetz Student and Behavior Code:

The advisor to the student council keeps a watchful eye on these students and encourages them to take an active part in the council.

Special Class students are oriented to the Guidance Office:

They fill out the regular Intake Sheet. These are checked for accuracy by the teacher. Any facts not known are taught to them. This is routine information found on most application blanks.

Students are taught to fill out a guidance pass:

They give the pass to their teacher and they are returned to the guidance office. The time of the conference is assigned. If an emergency arises the teacher will indicate this.

Special Class Students come to guidance and see the counselor with usual problems:

1. Trouble getting along with peer and others.
2. Not taking showers.
3. Forgetting gym suits.
4. In need of funds for gym equipment, materials for Home Economics or Industrial Arts. (The Guidance Benefit Fund is shared for all needy students. The student council supplies this fund.)
5. Also, to get working papers.
6. To find out how to become a candy striper.
7. The counselor arranges with the Special Class teacher to place a student in regular group in a particular subject i.e. Social Studies, Math, Art, etc., if after conference this is desirable.

All Special Class students have a regular scheduled conference in addition to conferences they request.

Parents of Special Class students are scheduled for conferences when students enter the school from another district, or out of state.

Parents attend the 9th grade graduation. Special students attend both the graduation and the dinner.

We make arrangements with the High School Counselor and the Special Class High School teachers to have the graduating students visit the high schools and the new classes. This helps to bridge the gap between junior high and high school and make the transition easier for them.

Special awards are given to these students on Awards Day. They have been won in track and good school citizenship.

The Work-Study Program was new to our school last year.

One of our counselors, Mr. Louis Mauro, wrote the proposal and the grant was given.

This project is in cooperation with the Youth Corps. The students are paid for their services. We have special students working for the custodian, cafeteria and the school nurse. They work four hours a day.

1. Before school
2. During study periods
3. After school

They work on a regularly scheduled time. They are evaluated by the person they are assigned to work with. Guidance is given when needed and a careful check of their progress is kept.

The Special Students have worked well and some are employed by the Youth Corps during the summer.

These students are given special guidance relating to a better understanding of themselves and their jobs. The counselor from the Youth Corps meets with the junior high counselor to discuss the students in the program. Students get additional help in grooming and work habits, good manners and helpful hints for saving some of their money.

WITHOUT COUNSELING AND COOPERATION: WHAT?

Mr. Eugene Leonard
Special Education Teacher
Knickerbacker Junior High School
Troy, New York

My career in special education started in 1959 when I accepted a job in a very large central school district with a very strong administration and a well established guidance department. In that particular guidance department, there were three people who, at that time, were very progressive. My beginning years were fostered by a very fine relationship with guidance. They did what I assumed everybody in every school in this state was doing. I took a great deal for granted.

In 1964 I had a rude awakening. I changed jobs. I went to a small system and had my first contact with special education in the raw. I was shown my room and was given the key, and was told this was it. Prior to my coming they had had a series of teachers, none of whom worked out very well as far as administration was concerned. They had had great problems with people pulling down walls, breaking windows, etc. My job was cut out for me.

In checking the file cabinets for materials, I came across one cumulative folder after another. Some were for the students I was about to meet. Others were from students of years past. There was a great collection of reading and arithmetic papers dating back to 1960, in all of them. There were psychologists' reports, I.Q.'s and other confidential material scattered through out. I straightened them out, as best I could, and after looking them over for my own information I bundled them together and headed for the guidance department. I thought that was where this sort of material belonged. I also wanted to introduce myself and find out who would be working with my charges. I remember well walking into that office and meeting a gal who put on her best interview smile. After introductions and indicating the folders, I said, "I thought you must be looking for these."

She said, "Oh! those are your cumulative records."

"Yes" said I, "Don't you keep them with the others."

"Well, she said, "We don't know anything about your children; we're not trained to handle them." With that she ended the interview and lost a client.

In the next few weeks I came to the realization that nothing had been done for this class in any area. They were in Room 312, a name or number infamous in the community. It had the same connotation as "retard." As far as anyone was concerned this was the way it was going to stay. As long as I kept the lid on that room and kept down the maintenance charges my job was secure. Teach I did not have to do; just keep them quiet.

That is not the way I was trained. I wanted to teach and knew they could learn.

With charm, a big mouth and much compromise, a program developed over the next few years that included Industrial Arts, Home Economics, Phys Ed and even music. The children got out of the room and I got teachers and administrators into it as much as possible.

Through this period I found nothing but resistance from the guidance department. With time however, changes came. At present my relations with guidance are fine. The woman with whom I now work is more than cooperative.

My primary concern is with children who are from the age of 14 through 16 years. This age of puberity for a child with the average mental age of 8 is most trying. Proper guidance is of the utmost importance. Because they are with the same teacher for most of their academic learning a special counselor is their only hope when things need to be talked out.

At this age they are ready to start to investigate the work world. The curriculum should be geared along this line. They become aware of their peer group and want to be like every one else. They become "ready" to learn. It is also at this point that the Special Class stigma" becomes most acute.

It is here that guidance is most needed. First as the placement and orientation agent for those coming from the lower grades. Second as the source of information and introduction of children coming from other systems, and to be guardian of personal records on all the children. Third as counselor to both student and teacher. Fourth guidance people can be a liaison with the regular teacher and the teacher of the mentally handicapped. They could help the special class teacher develop programs in the areas of Home Ec, Industrial Arts and Physical Education. Though I.Q. is a good gage for placement of children in Special Class, it is not a sentence. Some children, though impaired mentally, can benefit from placement in some regular classes. Again guidance can help in such placement. No child should be left behind because of a previous placement. Fifth, parent counseling is often needed and should be done in conjunction with guidance personnel. These children often come from homes where one or both parents are retarded, and social environment is very low. There are many times when the steady hand of a counselor is needed. Last but not least, it is the work of the guidance office to provide a shoulder on which to cry, both for the child and for the teacher. After a bad day a teacher needs to thrash out problems with someone who knows the children and is working with them.

It is my belief that teachers of the retarded should have training in good guidance procedures as part of their course of preparation. Guidance people should be trained in the problems that are specific to the mentally handicapped. Both should work together for the full development of the child.

If this were the case nothing but excellence could result. Who in Education today is more interested in the whole child than good guidance counselors and progressive special educators?

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES FOR THE EDUCABLE MENTALLY RETARDED: WORK STUDY TO EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Lance R. Jackson
Special Education Teacher
Ballston Spa High School
Ballston Spa, New York

My experience in the area of work study programs for the educable mentally handicapped is the result of seven years of teaching educable high school students and five years as Administrative Supervisor of the Ballston Spa Neighborhood Youth Corps Project in and for Saratoga County. The N.Y.C. Project is an anti-poverty work study program designed to keep children from economically deprived homes from dropping out of school. Interestingly enough most of my educable students fall into this category. We have found that this particular kind of student needs an extensive guidance and career orientated program and whenever we are able to get extra funds we expand our guidance efforts.

If our goal in this society today is to aid every child to become a productive citizen then we cannot ignore the mentally handicapped. You have read other reports which state that the mentally handicapped most often spend their time in school, in one class room with one teacher. A child with this limited contact obviously misses some very valuable educational experiences that his "normal" classmates take for granted. This experience alone (or lack of it) adds greatly to the difficulty of adjusting to a normal life and work situation. Yet we expect these children to leave school and go out and complete for jobs and status with their "Normal Peers" without, in most cases, having the educational and social experiences necessary to do this.

The average educable mentally handicapped child, (if there is such a creature) is more normal than not. Many educators say that these children begin to "bloom" at the Middle School or Junior High School level, whatever terminology you happen to currently be using, and that this is the critical point to begin academic concentration is obvious. I think Guidance has to really step in at this point and begin a concrete program of Career Education, exposing the students to the world in which they are expected to compete.

Continuing along this line of thinking I am a firm believer that we should not overtly point out a child's mental limitations, I don't think that we have the right to say to any child, "you haven't got the brains and must accept what I say as your station in life." I understand, and I think I am correct, I am sure that guidance people know this to be true, The average person changes his job about four times during his lifetime. Based on this, why then do we so often place a child in a work experience and say to him - this is your life's work, you are going to stay at this job because we have determined it is what you can do best. Oh! how disgruntled we become if he leaves it. The real reason we become so disgruntled is because it took a tremendous amount of work to set the job up in the first place.

Our goals and our programs must be broad enough so that we can help the child learn basic skills, self-confidence, reasonable values, and motivate learning processes so that the child can function in a work environment. The skills most needed are the techniques of finding, getting, and holding a job. After these, and with the child's participation, select an appropriate occupational or vocational training program. In our planning with the child we must consider action alternatives if his job should collapse or he feels it no longer suits his needs so that he can move on, much like his "normal" peers. The children have this right, and we have our duty to provide them with as much flexibility as possible - this is good mental health practice.

To make any educational program function well there must be an active and well prepared guidance organization. Such an organization can be justified many times over by cutting short the frustrating periods of indecision in the lives of individuals who do not know what they want to do, or of those who are in a training program for which they know they are not fitted. There is no magic formula. I can stand here and tell you what we do in Ballston Spa and Saratoga County; everybody can tell you what they do in their area. If any formula is to be found it is developed by cooperation, and extensive study of the areas resources and goals.

It is my feeling that guidance people are the most flexible and competent professionals who can survey local industries to determine their employment needs and plan with the appropriate people as how to fill those needs; this includes transportation problems if they exist within the community. I know guidance people do this in many instances but all too often they neglect the mentally handicapped child in their considerations. A typical dialogue that I am familiar with goes something like this: Guidance Counselor, "...Geel I don't know about that kid, I don't know what he is going to do, or how I can help him..." Guidance Counselor goes to special class teacher and receives this response to his questions; Special Class Teacher "...Geel I've got all these kids here that I have to teach this and that too. I've got to work with parents, Gee, I'll try to set something up for him if I can only find the time."

Through this type of experience the student develops a weak self-concept; he needs concrete action in which he can take an active part, not a half baked effort that some already overly burdened professional can make for him.

Speaking of self-concept brings to mind a true story about one of my students - I would like to share this with you.

I received a call from the office one day to come down right away. It seemed that one of my students had punched a kid in the nose and done considerable damage. When I got to the office the Vice Principal said to me, "What are we going to do?" I turned to my student and said in my best exasperated voice - "Well Jimmy what did you do?" and he said, "I smashed David in the nose." I proceeded to ask why and Jimmy replied, "David was calling me a dumb retard." I retorted, "So you smashed him in the nose! "No," came his answer" ...First I told him I wasn't a dumb retard, and that I'm just not as smart as he is. Then I hit him." I think this little story demonstrated that what has been inground into this child is an insiduous

realization as to what his limitations are and he proceeded to demonstrate this. A child like Jim did not like this very negative stigma pointed out to him. I think any human being will revolt in some manner if his weaknesses are constantly pointed out. Children get to know their weaknesses very well; society teaches them and constantly points to them. Guidance people are needed to point out strengths; to help the child find new strengths and ways to properly exploit them.

I heard someone say yesterday that in ten years there won't be anymore guidance counselors, that is, as we know them today. I don't know what all the implications are but I understand counselors are going to be doing a lot more with techniques of behavior modification and group counseling. I only request as you move toward these noble ends that you include the mentally handicapped. He needs acceptance from his peers and from you.

As we move ahead in the arena of life, let's consider together the importance of the fact that it is necessary that the mentally handicapped child's family, employer, and community at large understand him not as a mentally retarded person but as a person with rights, responsibilities, and the ability to do a job.

Let me conclude with some general objectives for a work study program.

1. Build self-confidence
2. Reasonable values and motivations
3. Learning to function in a work environment
4. Ways of finding, getting, and holding a job
5. Constructive use of leisure time
6. Family planning (concepts for social living)
7. Follow-up

ALWAYS FOLLOW UP!

COUNSELOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE MENTALLY RETARDED

Miss Nancy Boyer
Guidance Counselor
East Greenbush Junior High School
East Greenbush, New York

I would like to speak a few minutes concerning my perception of the counselor's role with the mentally retarded child. I have been a counselor of the terminal class for the mentally retarded for 9 years. I feel the retarded child should be treated the same as any other child assigned to the counselor. Samuel Kirk says in his book, "Educating Exceptional Children," the basic goals of mentally retarded children are - social competency, pe sonal adequacy and occupational competence. I feel these are basic goals of all children and all children need guidance and counseling to obtain these goals. Let's take these goals one at a time and apply them to the counselor's role with the mentally retarded - the stress on occupational competence and the secondary level.

1. Social Competency

Curriculum enters here; the children should be integrated with the school population in subjects such as, home ec, industrial arts, art, music and physical education. The counselor should see to it that schedules are made for each student including these subjects. Also encourage these children to enter extra-curricular activities such as chorus, sports, social functions, etc. A counselor can be a go-between for teacher to principal and for teacher to teacher.

The mentally retarded child should be encouraged to seek the counselor's help in all types of personal problems. Here is where the counselor must use directive techniques as it is difficult for a retarded child to gain insights into himself. I do not mean they should be told what to do but a few methods of how to obtain their goal should be pointed out. They must make the final choice, as they will have to make appropriate choices throughout their lives.

A major problem at the secondary level is peer problems. This is true of the academically "normal" child too. The retardate needs counseling to cope with these problems. Many times, dating seemed to be a problem. Through parent contacts many of our retarded students attended weekly dances in Albany at the center for retarded children. This helped them feel like a normal teenager and satisfied the normal desires to be attractive to the opposite sex. Parent contact is the key to developing a mentally retarded child into a happy, self-supporting adult. Close contact between counselor and teacher is needed to determine the extent of parent conferences. Some children need a yearly conference, others many, many conferences. The child can be kept socially immature by parents who are over-protective of their child. Joint conferences with teacher, counselor and parents proved fruitful.

The second goal of personal adequacy again is reflected in curriculum. As you know these children have met with a tremendous amount of failure, and the need to meet success is urgent. Success is first met in the classroom; the parents again must be educated to create successful experiences for the child in the home. The guidance counselor can be used as a resource person in many instances; for example, if parents seem resistant to the teacher's suggestions a joint conference (parent, teacher, counselor) again can be fruitful. The suggestions of another person many times can sway parent's opinion.

Successful experience must be developed in the special areas of home ec, industrial arts, etc. These teachers must be informed and educated to the retarded child. This can be done with meetings with the counselor, teachers, and special area teachers. The teachers must be informed they have a retarded child in their class.

The third goal of occupational competence is where I feel the counselor can be most helpful. First, they must take the responsibility of coordinating a "in school" work program. The children can work with the custodial staff, librarians, cafeteria staff, and with special area teachers (home ec, industrial arts.) The boys and girls should receive a wage of some type and be responsible for completing payroll slips. A pay raise should be incorporated for excellent work.

Since many schools are members of BOCES, the counselor should place the children in the occupational fields which suits the needs and interests of the child.

The most important function of counselor is permanent work placement for the mentally retarded child. The counselor needs to make many industrial visits in his region to acquaint the employers with the retarded child. During these visits the counselor should stress the positive work habits of these children. Field trips with graduating students to the particular industry they are interested in seems necessary. Obviously, occupational information should be an ongoing process for these children. Placements in hospitals, factories, school custodians, and food services has been successful areas for me.

The mentally retarded child should receive a high school diploma. This diploma would be awarded when teachers, the administrators, and the counselor feel the child is ready for employment.

To summarize a guidance counselor should work with the mentally retarded child, his parents, teachers, administration and finally regional industry.

A COOPERATIVE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Mrs. Helen Halloran
Special Education Teacher
Linton High School
Schenectady, New York

I'm a special education teacher at Linton High School in Schenectady. Our school has about 2,000 students and the building itself covers about 18 acres of ground. It is a long walk from where the students' homeroom is to the cafeteria and the gym or any other area in the school. I feel that we are dealing with children with special problems. I also feel that according to my title, "special education teachers" that I am a trained specialist in handling these problems.

I think the best thing I can do is to tell you about the rapport at Linton High School with the guidance department. To my way of thinking it is excellent. The guidance department and special education work very closely. There are three teachers in our department at Linton. In the Spring of each year before the spring recess or Easter recess, the teachers gather with the guidance counselors and discuss individual pupils in the classes. We try to find out where certain students excel, what their abilities are. Some students can show advanced ability in math. We try to refer these students to a practical math class or consumer math class. We do not do any of this work in the 10th grade because when a student comes in to us from the junior high school in the 10th grade, the student has enough to do to learn his way around the building to learn what is expected of him as a high school student. So we try to keep the 10th graders in the special education program but if there is a place for these students in the regular program in the 11th and 12th grade, we refer these through the guidance counselor. This is what takes place at this meeting in the Spring.

Some of the classes that we plan for these students are practical math, consumer math, distributive education, sometimes creative cookery, typing, fashion trades, sewing, auto transportation and there may be a slow class in English or a slow class in American History where one of our boys and girls could function very well. The program is set up with the idea that the student is to try this class for a 6 week period. If the student does not see success or sees frustration in the class he is referred to the special education classroom. I think, since 1958, only one student whom we have referred to an outside class has been returned to the regular special education classroom. After the program is set up and each student has a schedule, the schedule is given to the guidance counselor. The guidance counselor makes an apointment for a special interview with this student the same as every other student in the high school. The student has the interview, reports back to the classroom and is really thrilled that he has done something that is quite different. He is kind of secretive and proud because of it.

The 10th graders who come in in September are usually introduced at the school in the Spring. The guidance counselor from our junior high school accompanies the students over to the high school introduces them to the teachers in the special education department. The students in special education act as guides around the building for the new students or the incoming freshmen. They're grown up. They know something about a big building, and they're very anxious to show

their skill in getting around the building. In the senior year our students are interviewed by a counselor from New York State Employment Service. This appointment is arranged by the guidance counselor. The students have access to the guidance room at any time. When they ask for a pass for the guidance room, I usually ask them why they want to go and never refuse a pass, am very glad they have the desire to go. The guidance counselor never places a student in any class, unless he consults with one of the special education teachers. The teacher is the specialist. The teacher knows the problems the student has. Some students feel if their friend is in a class they want to get into that class. They have no skills, no desire to be in that class, but they want to join their friends. Then we could have problems; we could have discipline problems. We could have unhappiness among the students. The guidance counselors have been very helpful at Linton High School.

At the end of the calendar year several inventories at Almart's, Wallace Company and Carl Company, both in Schenectady, and the students in special education are always considered by the guidance counselor for an opportunity to work on these inventories. I think for the past three years many of mine went to Almart's and Carl Company in Schenectady. I feel that the guidance counselors work closely with the boys and girls in my class. They want to do the best they can for them. They are concerned with the students.

If there are any little jobs around the school, the boys and girls can do they always recommend them for them. The students in my class have a messenger service. They deliver messages, the absentee list in the morning, the tardy list in the afternoon. They work for different departments in the school. They do collating. They are recommended by the guidance counselor for this. They work for the French department, the English department, Social Studies department and they have many, many opportunities. I know these students would not have these opportunities unless the guidance department worked with the special education teachers to see if they couldn't really get a well-rounded career for these youngsters set in life as the teacher herself. I really haven't any gripes at all with my guidance department. I think they've done an excellent job. I think they work very hard to do as much and perhaps more for the students in my class, than they <u>do for the</u> students in the regular classes.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED

Mr. William Deyo
Vocational Guidance
Albany Board of Education
Vocational Center

In the fall of 1967 the Albany Vocational Center was one of the first occupational centers to admit educable retarded students. In the light of our experiences during these 4 years, I would encourage all area occupational centers to accept special class students, for I feel, as our Vocational Education Director in 1967 felt, that occupational education should be available for as wide a range of occupations as possible, so as to provide training for students of all abilities, whetner they score 50 or 150 on an I.Q. test.

The Albany Vocational Center is very similar to the BOCES occupational centers that probably serve most of your districts. Basically the majority of our students are 10th, 11th and 12th grade students from the regular high school programs and are with us for approximately 3 hours per day either in the morning or the afternoon class. The other half day they are taking English, social studies, math, science and some electives in their homehigh school.

Our total enrollment of 230 students includes approximately 40 special students. With the exception of 2 or 3 boys who have been successful in welding, nearly all of these special class students have entered the foods, health services or building repair and maintenance classes. Our foods class is taught by a former chef from the Hotel Ten Eyck and our health class has been taught by a registered nurse. Our building maintenance course which started the year before, had been organized chiefly for regular students who could not handle fractions in carpentry, decimals in machine shop, etc. Higher skilled courses which require greater academic abilities have typically been the type of course vocational education has offered, I think, largely due to the fact that they started with small funds. These very highly skilled occupations require extensive training but at the same time a number of students of low ability were being encouraged to stay in school. Not wanting to elect academic courses, these students often chose difficult vocational courses. However, when occupational courses are available which utilize different abilities, students usually avoid the courses which are too difficult for them if they suspect they may fail.

I feel it is beneficial to have special students in classes with regular high school students wherever the requirements of the occupation are attainable by both. It is interesting to see the special class student for example that has a particular knack perhaps in cooking and to see regular students begin to look up to him. Often times everyone who is capable is required to learn every operation and so, for example, a regular student may be learning how to run the automatic dishwasher from a special class student. However, such integration of regular and special students should be worked out in a cooperative way with the individual teacher as I have found some teachers who feel that for example in the health field, regular students can be studying on a much more technical level.

A main source of placement in our area has been the hospitals. They've been very cooperative and have been hiring a great number in positions such as diet maids, nurse aides, maids, housekeeping and transportation. One boy who graduated in 1968, came back to see me just a few days ago. He was on his vacation and told me of four of his classmates that were still working with him in the housekeeping department of a hospital doing everything from sterilizing beds after patients have left, to janitorial work. This particular boy had been a terrific man with a floor polisher. He was a big boy and just loved it. He would work until the sweat would pour right off him. In calling his employer afterwards, I foun d that he was extremely pleased with him. In fact, he was pleased with all four. The reason I called him was that this boy had come in to ask me what the chances were of his getting into carpentry. So I just quizzed him, as I often do, on fractions. He wasn't able to handle the adding and subtracting of fractions, and so I pointed out the amount of measuring and so forth that is involved in carpentry. The boy had indicated mainly that he was bored because his last assignment had been a long one of just picking up the trash, and really what I think he wanted was a little more variety. The supervisor said that he'd been such a good worker he would be sure to assign him to floor polishing again and try to rotate his assignments more.

The State University Food Services have hired some of our graduates and students in their kitchens as waitresses, dishwashers, kitchen helpers and short order cooks. A few have gone into factory janitorial or laborer work.

These are the main jobs our special education students are employed in. We are looking for new avenues and this is one of the reasons why I became involved in this panel, because I would like to learn of more kinds of training which we might offer.

I have here a list of 66 jobs in which the civil service commission has placed mentally retarded people. One thing that it creates in me is the feeling of caution because I find occupations such as draftsman and various kinds of clerks; jobs which generally require a relatively high degree of academic talent. I don't want to raise students' hopes that they will be able to do all these things unless there is some indication they can obtain such jobs on a competitive level. I think often times government jobs tend not always to be as competitive when they take on a program of this nature. I mentioned yesterday that some of our Neighborhood Youth Corps kids, when we first started, came back to us after summer placement in an office and did not want to consider placement in hospitals and so on, because they wanted to work toward office work. Some of them wound up unemployed and I often think it was partly due to this resistance.

I am interested in the kinds of work that your students, your past graduates and dropouts are working at. Perhaps your organization could get some sort of survey of the kinds of jobs in which special class students have been successful. I think you might be one of the best resources for this information as I suspect many return to visit you.

I am also interested in additional jobs these students could handle if training were available.

I look to vocational education to help bring people up to their potential. I believe many students who have graduated from an academic or general program have taken jobs that educable retarded students could have handled. If we can better train everyone so that he can move into as high a level job as he is capable of as he finishes school, I think it will improve the entire manpower situation.

SUMMARY:
FROM THE TEACHER'S VIEWPOINT!

Mrs. Veronica DeLaRosa
Special Education Teacher
School No. 12
Troy, New York

1. We feel that our children's needs are the same as those of all children, even though MH children may need a little more support to achieve their goals.

2. We feel that the S-B test score alone is not a valid basis on which to place a child in special class.

3. We agree with the law that a committee of school psychologist, physician, and teachers should make the decision on placement - but add that the law should insist that the teachers involved with this child, both "regular" and "special" in the event of a new placement, in either direction, must be part of the committee.

4. We feel that placement in special class should be open-ended, so that children who test 1.5 standard deviation below the norm at one age may be allowed to work their way into a multi-level or slow learning group whenever they show the ability to make the change.

5. We need the support of guidance both as resource for the teacher and pupil - (a) in crises; (b) as liaison with the home; (c) for information on materials teachers might use; (d) information on techniques that may be used for behavior modification; (e) for information about community resources that might be open to the teacher; (f) for a mutually helpful talk session that might turn up some particular area or method of teaching that might change a child's attitude or outlook; (g) for job information and later placement.

6. Perhaps guidance could help us set up individualized instructions or curriculum.

7. We realize that guidance personnel are hard pressed for time. Could we mutually support each other in pressing for change so that aides or secretaries could take over non-counseling activities, freeing counselors for their more important roles. And could we not expect other professionals to get a little insight into the role of the special class teacher and the meaning and goals of the special class?

8. One comment we heard at the meeting was that teachers as well as guidance personnel are too complacent, feeling they're doing a very good job. Could it be that the very idea of doing a good job requires dissatisfaction with present results and the recognition of the need for constant reevaluation in order to improve?

We, guidance and teachers, need to help each other. Together we may be strong enough to press for change. Separately we will surely not be heard or heeded.

SUMMARY: FROM THE COUNSELOR'S VIEWPOINT

Mr. Sid Ayers
Director of Guidance
Hyde Park Public Schools
Hyde Park, New York

When this panel first convened several months ago one of our major tasks was to determine how each of us with our varied backgrounds of education and experience could best serve the dual assignment of being both presenter and reactor to a topic of major concern. In one instance as a guidance counselor, serving in a school district of about 8,000 students, I was being asked to look at the problems of working realistically with the mentally retarded group while faced with a backlog of appointments, transcripts, schedule changes, etc., also knowing that in the next instance, I was going to be criticized by a group of teachers faced with the day to day tasks of working and wondering whether counselors knew they were there, or worse if they even cared.

Forewarned is forearmed. In anticipation of what might occur I set about visiting special education classes within not only my school district but within my county. Many for the first time in my 15 years of service in this community. In every instance I was most welcome. In every instance guidance was criticized. Most of it coming from those engaged in working with the early secondary and secondary levels. In most instances the criticism was valid, though much should be directed at administrators and their levels of priority in making assignments. In general, however, this is what they would like to see:

1. People in guidance who understand their needs. What are the problems, the frustrations, the expectancies, etc.?

2. A rightful portion of the counselors time. Their children are as special as those gifted with their minds or hands. In many instances the special education student is assigned a center away from his home school. A periodic visit from the home school counselor, if for no other reason than to reassure one that he still belongs, can be of service.

3. An opportunity to share information with the counselor. To interpret what he sees daily. To explore the possibility of specialized individual programs for each child with one more closely involved with the total school offerings. To make certain that each clearly recognizes the potential that might be there.

4. To help see the need for improved testing programs that include the special education child. To help pressure for meaningful devices within the child's reach.

5 To help provide up to date career files designed to fit the needs of the mentally retarded. This type of material might serve to bring the special education student and his needs to the attention of the counselor and the librarian as well.

6. Help in working with the families involved, in terms of realistic career planning, social and emotional understanding as well as acceptance of placement assignments.

7. Help as a resource and crisis intervention person. A place to turn where one can find understanding and patience without the administrative concepts of behavior or control.

8. Placement and follow-up help for their students. There is a special need for employers to know the potentials of the special student. If he knows what to expect he will make a more realistic attempt at evaluation and placement. Follow-up and periodic discussion with the student regarding his experiences is also needed. Counselors simply by the nature of their other assignments should have little difficulty fitting this into the pattern of their work day. What happens to the student who simply drops out of the school program. Many do make successful adjustments to life and work. What can the counselor and teacher learn as a result of this experience.

9. Help in developing an up to date file to be used for referral purposes. A short description of the agency, telephone number, personnel and procedures is badly needed. Counselors usually have a wide variety of services they may make referral to at their finger tips. There is a need to share this information with others by getting it in written form.

10. Help from the counselor by way of acting as the pupils ombudsman as well as to share in the responsibility to communicate to administrators and faculty the many moods, feelings and needs of the special education child.

11. Help in the design and development of Life Skills as well as acceptable ways of coping, behavior and self-management.

12. There is a need for the counselor to lend his voice and support for the total school program not just portions. The counselor with the courage of his convictions is in an ideal position to act with everyone from teacher to parent to student to community as an agent for change.

13. Help in having the total school community accept their (the special education child) goals with the same dignity and sense of worth as that of one of academic honors and collegiate placement.

14. Help in understanding the role and task of the special education teacher. Just what do they do with their teaching day. A real need for the counselor to "Walk in my shoes." Why not take over a class for a special project or set period of time. It could provide a real understanding of the task as well as interchange of ideas on how each member of the guidance and teaching team could help each other.

As a direct result of the experiences above as a concerned counselor I should like to see some movement in the following areas:

1. In-service training programs for counselors to bring them up to date in terms of late research, statistics, resources, expectations promising guidance programs, etc.

2. An encouragement from administrators with perhaps help from the State Education Department to do more by way of follow-up studies. What happens with the statistics of the changing percentages of special education people when they leave school? What leads to their adjustment problems with school and little to their adjustment with life itself once the school experience is over.

3. A periodic mailing to counselors from bureaus other than the Bureau of Guidance. To up date them as this committee is trying to do in the area of mental retardation.

4. Enforcement of the requirement for school districts to periodically reevaluate each special education child. Counselors as well as special education teachers continually see children who can and do adjust to regular school programs. The understanding and permissiveness of allowing special education students to try and to take part in the normal school schedule, varies dramatically even within one school district to the point where one wonders how close some teachers and administrators come to violating the civil rights of their students.

5. A complete rethinking from the State Education Department on down as to what is required for a standard high school diploma. Marking systems vary from teacher to teacher and school to school. Why is it perfectly acceptable fro the same teacher to fail a student based upon a number grade but to pass him without comment on a satisfactory or unsatisfactory grade.

6. I should like to see some determined effort on the past of someone trying to convince administrators and others that flexible scheduling also can mean flexible thinking and that meaningful schedules are more useful than modular.

7. There is a need for an up dating of what the real goals the educational experience should be for each individual. We can no longer permit the umbrella of success which covers scholarships, acceptance to the Ivy League schools, scholarships or even holding power. Each of us in our daily work sees ample evidence of success based upon criteria other than those listed above.

8. In addition to the suggestions made above perhaps the following should be added periodically to a mandated reading list:

I TAUGHT THEM ALL

I have taught for ten years. During that time, I have given assignments, among others, to a murderer, an evangelist, a pugilist, a thief, and an imbecile.

The murderer was a quiet little boy who sat on the front seat and regarded me with pale blue eyes; the evangelist, easily the most popular boy in school, had the lead in the junior play; the pugilist lounged by the window and let loose at intervals with a raucous laugh that startled even the geraniums; the thief was a gay-hearted Lothario with a song on his lips; and the imbecile, a soft-eyed little animal seeking the shadows.

The murderer awaits death in the state penitentiary; the evangelist has lain a year now in the village churchyard; the pugilist lost an eye in a brawl in Hong Kong; the thief, by standing on tiptoe, can see the windows of my room from the county jail; and the once gentle-eyed moron beats his head against a padded cell in the state asylum.

All these pupils once sat in my room, sat and looked at me grimly across worn brown desks. I have been a great help to these pupils--I taught them the dates of battles, the boundaries of states, and how to find square roots by the algebraic method.